

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3287

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## AN ACT

To award congressional gold medals posthumously on behalf of Reverend Joseph A. DeLaine, Harry and Eliza Briggs, and Levi Pearson in recognition of their contributions to the Nation as pioneers in the effort to desegregate public schools that led directly to the landmark desegregation case of Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka et al.



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1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4       The Congress finds as follows:

5               (1) The Reverend Joseph Armstrong DeLaine,  
6       one of the true heroes of the civil rights struggle, led  
7       a crusade to break down barriers in education in  
8       South Carolina.

9               (2) The efforts of Reverend DeLaine led to the  
10      desegregation of public schools in the United States,  
11      but forever scarred his own life.

12              (3) In 1949, Joseph DeLaine, a minister and  
13      school principal, organized African-American parents  
14      in Summerton, South Carolina, to petition the school  
15      board for a bus for black students, who had to walk  
16      up to 10 miles through corn and cotton fields to at-  
17      tend a segregated school, while the white children in  
18      the school district rode to and from school in nice  
19      clean buses.

20              (4) In 1950, these same parents, including  
21      Harry and Eliza Briggs, sued to end public school  
22      segregation in Briggs et al. v. Elliott et al., one of  
23      5 cases that collectively led to the landmark 1954  
24      Supreme Court decision of Brown et al. v. Board of  
25      Education of Topeka et al.

1           (5) Because of his participation in the desegre-  
2           gation movement, Reverend DeLaine was subjected  
3           to repeated acts of domestic terror in which—

4                   (A) he, along with 2 sisters and a niece,  
5           lost their jobs;

6                   (B) he fought off an angry mob;

7                   (C) he received frequent death threats; and

8                   (D) his church and his home were burned  
9           to the ground.

10          (6) In October 1955, after Reverend DeLaine  
11          relocated to Florence County in South Carolina,  
12          shots were fired at the DeLaine home, and because  
13          Reverend DeLaine fired back to mark the car, he  
14          was charged with assault and battery with intent to  
15          kill.

16          (7) The shooting incident drove him from South  
17          Carolina to Buffalo, New York, where he organized  
18          an African Methodist Episcopal Church.

19          (8) Believing that he would not be treated fairly  
20          by the South Carolina judicial system if he returned  
21          to South Carolina, Reverend DeLaine told the Fed-  
22          eral Bureau of Investigation, “I am not running  
23          from justice but injustice”, and it was not until  
24          2000 (26 years after his death and 45 years after

1 the incident) that Reverend DeLaine was cleared of  
2 all charges relating to the October 1955 incident.

3 (9) Reverend DeLaine was a humble and fear-  
4 less man who showed the Nation that all people, re-  
5 gardless of the color of their skin, deserve a first-  
6 rate education, a lesson from which the Nation has  
7 benefited immeasurably.

8 (10) Reverend DeLaine deserves rightful rec-  
9 ognition for the suffering that he and his family en-  
10 dured to teach the Nation one of the great civil  
11 rights lessons of the last century.

12 (11) Like the Reverend DeLaine and Harry  
13 and Eliza Briggs, Levi Pearson was an integral par-  
14 ticipant in the struggle to equalize the educational  
15 experiences of white and black students in South  
16 Carolina.

17 (12) Levi Pearson, with the assistance of Rev-  
18 erend Joseph DeLaine, filed a lawsuit against the  
19 Clarendon County School District to protest the in-  
20 equitable treatment of black children.

21 (13) As a result of his lawsuit, Levi Pearson  
22 also suffered from acts of domestic terror, such as  
23 the time gun shots were fired into his home, as well  
24 as economic consequences: local banks refused to  
25 provide him with credit to purchase farming mate-

1       rials and area farmers refused to lend him equip-  
2       ment.

3           (14) Although his case was ultimately dismissed  
4       on a technicality, Levi Pearson's courage to stand  
5       up for equalized treatment and funding for black  
6       students served as the catalyst for further attempts  
7       to desegregate South Carolina schools, as he contin-  
8       ued to fight against segregation practices and be-  
9       came President of Clarendon County Chapter of the  
10      NAACP.

11          (15) When Levi Pearson's litigation efforts to  
12      obtain equalized treatment and funding for black  
13      students were stymied, Harry and Eliza Briggs, a  
14      service station attendant and a maid, continued to  
15      fight for not only equalized treatment of all children  
16      but desegregated schools as well.

17          (16) As with Reverend DeLaine and Levi Pear-  
18      son, the family of Harry and Eliza Briggs suffered  
19      consequences for their efforts: Harry and Eliza both  
20      were fired from their jobs and forced to move their  
21      family to Florida.

22          (17) Although they and their family suffered  
23      tremendously, Harry and Eliza Briggs were also pio-  
24      neers leading the effort to desegregate America's  
25      public schools.

1 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—In recognition of  
3 the contributions of Reverend Joseph A. DeLaine, Harry  
4 and Eliza Briggs, and Levi Pearson to the Nation as pio-  
5 neers in the effort to desegregate public schools that led  
6 directly to the landmark desegregation case of Brown et  
7 al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka et al., the Speaker  
8 of the House of Representatives and the President Pro  
9 Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrange-  
10 ments for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of  
11 a gold medal of appropriate design, to Joseph De Laine,  
12 Jr., as next of kin of Reverend Joseph A. DeLaine, and  
13 to the next of kin or other personal representative of  
14 Harry and Eliza Briggs and of Levi Pearson.

15 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the  
16 awards referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the  
17 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-  
18 retary”) shall strike 3 gold medals with suitable emblems,  
19 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-  
20 retary.

21 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

22 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
23 bronze of the gold medals struck pursuant to section 2,  
24 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe,  
25 and at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, includ-



1 ing labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead  
 2 expenses, and the cost of the gold medals.

3 **SEC. 4. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.**

4 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-  
 5 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter  
 6 51 of title 31, United States Code.

7 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section  
 8 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck  
 9 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

10 **SEC. 5. FUNDING.**

11 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is  
 12 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint  
 13 Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be nec-  
 14 essary to pay for the cost of the medals authorized by this  
 15 Act.

16 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
 17 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be  
 18 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise  
 19 Fund.

Passed the House of Representatives November 18,  
 2003.

Attest:

*Clerk.*